The MEDICAL MISSIONARY

The Water Carrier of the Hospital

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THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN HINDUISM AND VEDISM

By An Indian

THE following are extracts of Hindu law regarding questions of inheritance, marriage, adoption, wills and other social relations. The three principal sources of Hindu law are the *Shruti,* being the expressions of this deity, the *Smriti,* being traditions from the sayings of the old sages, and the customs.

Hindu law was first applied by the English judges with the help of pundits. The institution of pundits as official arbiters was abolished in 1868. Later the tribunals took it upon themselves to interpret the law. The following laws apply to women:

Marriage

A Hindu may marry one or more wives even if he already have several wives living. (S. 348.)

A woman can not remarry. (S. 349.) Even the death of a husband does not give her this right. This law has been abrogated by an act of legislation. (Act XX, 1856.)

The Hindu marriage is looked upon as a sacrament in theory, but not in practice and in its consequences. The union can be dissolved at any time by the husband but never by the wife; as a result, the consequences of a Hindu marriage are serious for the woman.

Bandhayan (a rish legislator) justifies a husband divorcing his wife after 10 years of marriage if she has no children; after 12 years, if she has only daughters; after 15 years, if all her children have died; and without delay, if she be quarrelsome.

The right of giving a daughter in marriage belongs to the following in the order indicated: father, grandfather on the father's side, brother, other male relatives, mother. (Thus the mother is the last to have the right to give her daughter in marriage.)

The Status of Women

Narut, a *smirti-kar* rishi, says, "He who does not pay back to the owner the money loaned to him, will live in the future life in the house of his debtor as a slave, a servant, a woman or a quadrupede."

Manu, the great Hindu legislator, who is considered the first interpreter of Vedic texts and whose precepts are still generally observed to the letter, says, "A woman, a son and a slave are devoid of property. All they acquire becomes the property of those to whom they belong." (Manu XIII, 416). "Day and night women must be kept by their parents in a state of dependence; their fathers protect them in their childhood, their husbands in their youth and their sons in their old age. A woman is never fit for independence." (XI, 2, 3.) "From the beginning to the end she is simply a creature at the mercy of others, be they good, bad or indifferent." Defining a virtuous woman, he continues, "She is virtuous who honors her husband, even if he be of bad character, love another woman or be devoid of good qualities. In spite of all this, a husband must be venerated constantly by his wife." (Ch. V, 154.) Manu always places a woman on the same level as her husband no matter how good or noble she be. (To place her on the same level, seems contradictory from the foregoing.) Concerning liberty of conscience Manu says, "No sacrifice, no vow, no fast can be made by a woman apart from her husband. If a wife obey her husband, it is the only reason for which she will be exalted in heaven." (Ch. V, 155.) (Religious liberty is a primordial need of human beings just as air, light, water and food; it is refused to Hindu women.)

Bandhayan says, "It is not permitted to a man to loan anything to women, slaves and children," and again, "women are devoid of sense and can not inherit."

Ramayan, which is considered one of the holiest books, prescribes that peasants, the depressed classes, animals and women should be guarded with a sceptre of iron.

Allowance

No allowance can be made to the widow from the estate of her deceased husband except by a decree of the tribunal or by common accord. Consequently, the right of women to an allowance is of a very indefinite character.

The widow takes only a very small portion of the possessions of her deceased husband, called the property of the widow. She has a right to the revenue only of the property which she has inherited. At her death her possessions do not go to her own heirs but to the second heir of her husband. (Ss. 42, 144.)

A Hindu is obliged to bring up and provide food for his illegitimate sons. (S. 457.) There is no text in Hindu law about the support of illegitimate daughters. According to the Code of Criminal Procedure, they have the right to demand support from the father. (Section 488.)

Inheritance

A father can at any time disinherit his sons, his wife or other heirs. Explicit words are not necessary to disinherit the natural heirs; it suffices to have the property designated to other persons. (S. 306.)

No woman is heir unless she be explicitly mentioned in the will. (S. 50.)

It is a general rule that women never take entire possession of what they inherit since they have no right to pass it on to heirs of their own

choice. (S. 323.) When a man inherits, he becomes the proprietor (integral) of his inheritance. (S. 141.)

Guardianship of Minors

The following persons are considered natural guardians of a minor Hindu in the order mentioned: the father, the mother, the grandparents on the father's side, the grandparents on the mother's side. (S. 430.) (Again the father is preferred to the mother.) But the tribunals after considering the age, the sex and the circumstances of the child, allow it to be with the mother as long as the child is dependent on her. (Mohammedan law is more considerate in this respect since it allows the mothers the guardianship of the infant in preference to the father. According to Mohammedan law, the mother has the guardianship of her sons up to the age of seven and of the girls to the age of 15 years. The mother does not lose this right even in case of divorce.)

Adoption

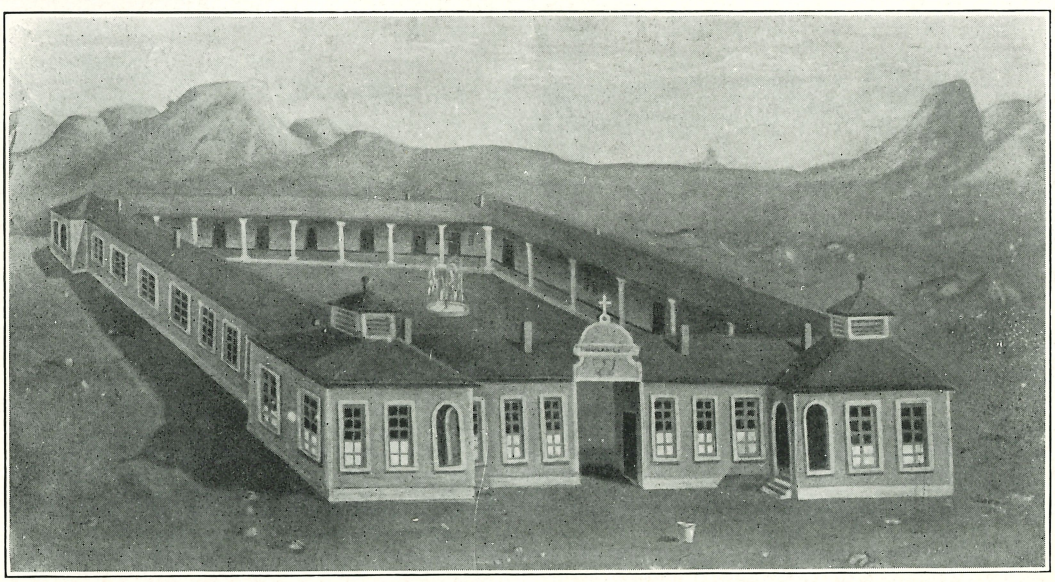
A married woman, without the express permission of her husband, or a widow can not adopt a child. (S. 367.)

The father has absolute authority to allow his son to be adopted by someone else, even if the mother is opposed. (Dr. Gour S. 674.)

As a tree can be judged by its fruits, so the civilization of a people can be judged by its customs and manners. In Hindu law the rights of men are guarded with great care, but it is a sad fact that there are no measures taken to safeguard the rights of women. Our Hindu sisters have suffered social injustice and a cruel fate for many centuries. Even now how many feel that there is something unnatural in our attitude towards our mother, our sisters and our daughters, the real makers of a country and a people. The reason is that in ancient Hinduism the woman is considered a thing, a being inferior to man, intellectually and morally. Consequently, the Hindu sacred books dwell on their duties but never on their rights.

One is therefore led to believe that in the formation of Hindu society the woman was not considered an important factor. It is difficult to imagine how the ancient sages could have written these things. Whoever takes the trouble to study Hindu books will find that the laws for men are different from those for women. From the beginning to the end, the life of a woman is a series of difficulties and sufferings. Even the smallest detail of her daily life, such as food, gait, sleep, bath, religious cult, exercise in the open were restricted, to keep her continually at the mercy of man who claimed the attributes and adoration due to the gods. The strangest thing is that in spite of the numerous iniquities, the majority of our orators and papers try to describe the conditions of the masses and of the women of India in such a way that outsiders can not see the weak points of our social injustices. The present day tendency of India is to extol everything Indian and to blacken nearly everything that is Western.

Everyone who loves justice asks himself how such injustices were tolerated by the ancient sages, when these very things are revolting to any man who has a sense of justice and honesty. If our ancestors have not taken any measures for the protection of women, what hope can one have that better treatment will be meted out by the Hindus of our age or in the future? Of course, if by good fortune, a woman is married to a good man, she may never have to suffer from these injustices, but if that be not the case, then she is in a position without help or hope. All the arms which could be used to defend her or to fight the battle are in the hands of men. Her hands are tied by chains forged by men. Dr. Gour writes in his book on Hindu law, "There is no hope for the Hindus, unless a new avatar appears to simplify their religion and to codify their laws."—*Bhagat Ram Jiv from l'Egyptienne.*



THIS NEW 60-BED CATHOLIC MISSION HOSPITAL IN THE PREFECTURE APOSTOLIC OF THE GARIEP, SOUTH AFRICA, IN CHARGE OF THE FATHERS OF THE SACRED HEART, NEEDS A WOMAN DOCTOR. WHO WILL VOLUNTEER?

THE SUN SHINES FOR ALL

By Dr. Anna Dengel

A DISEASE which is very prevalent among the women of India is osteomalacia. It is a softening of the bones brought about mainly by lack of sunlight and improperly balanced food. It occurs among all classes of women in that country. Purdah women, who are confined to their homes, are more often affected.

My first case of it was in Kashmir. During a few weeks' holiday passed in that earthly paradise, "made beautiful by God and vile by man," I went with the Sisters to the surrounding villages to bring relief to the suffering and pave the way for future service. Invariably, as we approached, some man who had seen us or heard of us before, took it upon himself to go through the district, announcing in a loud voice, that we were people who had medicines for rheumatism, worms, sore eyes and indigestion. Soon a crowd gathered in the shade of a tree or near a house and it was very obvious that the "trumpeter" was not a bad diagnostician. Sore eyes of all descriptions always abounded. Many adults complained of *badhazmi* (indigestion) and their sallow faces and shrivelled figures were ample proof of the truth of the statement. Others clamored for medicine for worms, whether they had them or only imagined they had. Those suffering from the so-called *riri* (rheumatism) complained of vague pains all over. Evident signs of malnutrition and bad teeth made it impossible to do anything for them on the spur of the moment.

Having talked ourselves hoarse recommending a free and frequent use of soap and water, and having broken the ice of fear and prejudice, some man usually came along, salaamed most profoundly, calling down on us all the blessings of heaven and asked if we would not go and see a sick *bibi* (woman) in a house not far away. Off we went and were ushered into a wooden hut with another profound salaam. In a back room, dark and stuffy, with women sitting here and there on string beds, we were introduced to a pitiful figure cowering in a squatting position in a corner. Not without a ring of hope in her voice, she asked, "Is this the Doctor*Memsahiba?*" Then she, or oftener her relatives, women only being present, said that for five or six years she had been suffering from pains in the wrists, spine, hips, knees, ankles, all over, as a matter of fact, and that after the birth of her last baby, she was not able to walk any more. Of late her bones had become so deformed that she could not even lie flat on her back. There she was helpless and hopeless, a burden to herself and to the household. Nobody knew the cause of her trouble or how to remedy it.

Passing from house to house similar stories were heard. Astrologers would say, "It is their fate." What is our verdict? Scientists have dis-

MIDDLE CLASS MOHAMMEDAN LADIES

covered that the body needs the health-giving ultra-violet rays which are one of the greatest sources of the indispensable vitamin D which is also found in cod-liver oil, liver, animal fat and other foods and which is a vital necessity for growth and bone formation. It did not require deep thought to discover that the unfortunate woman, living in semi-darkness, and subsisting on a diet of curry and rice was the victim of a vitamin D famine. If vitamin D containing foods are not available, there is more need to make a fuller use of sunlight in order to supply the deficiency.

Indian women stand little chance of getting their rightful share of vitamin D. They go out but rarely and then it may be that they are completely shrouded in a *burka*, as is still customary among the well-to-do Mohammedans, thus being deprived of sunlight and its beneficial rays. On the other hand, among the Hindus, abstention from animal fat cuts off this source of supply of vitamin D. Many are bound to suffer as a consequence. Even if the effect does not amount to actual crippling there is an absence of wellbeing, energy, joyousness, and general interest in life. Children also grow up rickety and anemic having been deprived of their quota of sunshine and proper food. And why? Poverty? Yes, to some extent, but ignorance too is a contributing factor. Would not every Indian woman be interested to hear of the benefit of sunlight for herself and her family, to know the kind of food the body requires to be well and strong in order to resist the hundred and one kinds of disease which threaten it on all sides in a tropical land, and to understand how to live happily and healthily? Everyone likes to know how to preserve his health. Other races do not differ from us in that respect. In America and Europe, health columns in the daily papers and magazines are among the most popular features. Public interest in matters of health may not be universal, yet one can say that the day of apathy is gone and every year there are more opportunities of sharing scientific discoveries with our neighbors of the Orient.

This work of its very nature must appeal to many young women who may feel prepared to help us to fight against ignorance, suffering and disease. We can promise them, that in joining our ranks, they will find unlimited scope for realizing the highest aspirations of soul and mind.

MALARIA REMEDIES "TRIED ON THE BIRD"

The old injunction, to "try it on the dog first," is modified to "try it on the bird" in present-day malaria laboratories. At the Wellcome Chemical Research Laboratories, London, where remedies for tropical diseases are constantly under investigation, Dr. T. A. Henry and associates are taking advantage of a fact discovered many years ago, that birds as well as men are subject to malaria. So birds are being tried out as experimental animals for proposed new malaria cures, in place of the time-honored guinea-pigs, rabbits and dogs.

THE GANGES AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The year 1930 was marked by one of the largest religious festivals in India, which is held every 12 years, and which brought to Allahabad three and one-half million pilgrims, two and one-half of whom bathed on the same day, January 29, in the Ganges. Great preparations had been made to assure the distribution of pure water, to ferret out the sick and place them in hospitals, and to increase the vaccinations. Only 168 cases of cholera were treated, and cholera was less frequent in India during the following two months than during the corresponding period of the preceding years.—Pub. Health Report, November 7, 1930.

ISLAM ADOPTS MONEY-SAVING DEVICE

Kemal Pascha has ordered large loud speakers to be fixed to the minarets in Turkey to call out the times of prayer from a central station in order to reduce expenses connected with the paying of the salaries of the numerous muezzins. —*Kath. Missionen.*

Sister M. Frances writes from Rawalpindi:

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sides of it. The women were seated on the floor holding their babies in their arms while the men stood behind in a half-circle.

"Huge pans of ghee (clarified butter) were brought to the groom. During the reading he fed the fire with it while the bride walked around it twice. Watching her with her flimsy sari or veil so near the sputtering fire, one held one's breath lest some stray spark provoke a conflagration. After more reading, the bride's mother joined the hands of the youthful pair and the bride presented the groom with rice and sweets in exchange for clothing and money. Twice again was the fire encircled but this time she was accompanied by the groom, who held her hand, walking behind her.

"More reading followed and at last the 'knot was tied' by his fastening one corner of a handkerchief to his own finger and another corner to her veil. Both then fed the fire with ghee while I had visions of a ghee famine. Twice he held his hand before her eyes, evidently that she should not see any farther than he intended. This was followed by the pair making the seven sacred steps and exchanging places on the sofa. Once more the double circuit of the fire was made, this time she followed him. They presented rice to each other's relatives, who in their turn exchanged similar gifts. Finally the bride stood on a rock during some reading and with the chanting of songs the ceremony concluded. It had lasted nearly five hours."

THE SOCIETY AT HOME AND ABROAD

THE farewell ceremony for our departing missionaries was held at the Holy Cross Foreign Mission Seminary on January 22. His Lordship the Right Reverend Bishop George Finnigan, C.S.C., presided and the sermon was preached by the Reverend Vincent F. Kienberger, O.P.

He recalled the scene in the Argonne when from the lips of a wounded soldier broke the cry, "Father, give us the wee Christ," words learned at a mother's knee. The same cry was being sent up by the pagan world today and was being answered by the bands of missionaries leaving our shores. These missionaries were going forth as disciples of Christ, copies of the Divine Model, animated by the same purpose and ideals, and as the shadow of St. Peter falling on the poor at the Porch of Solomon was sufficient to restore health to the sick, so might these bring light and healing to the sufferers in far off lands. They were to become images of Christ Himself on their mission of mercy and no more fitting words could be used to wish them God-speed, than those familiar to Catholic ears, *"Dominus vobiscum."*

After the missionaries had renewed their solemn promise and mission oath, His Lordship congratulated them on their wisdom in the path they had chosen and assured them in the words of the Cure d'Ars that they were going like a cannon ball straight to God.

The music was exquisitely rendered by the seminary choir under the direction of Mr. C. A. Benson.

Our best thanks are due to the V. Rev. Michael Mathis for his unfailing hospitality.

The missionaries sailed from New York on the S. S. *Biancomano* on January 23. Sr. Margaret M. Van Agtmael, R.N., a graduate of Mercy Hospital, Muskegon, Mich., and Sr. M. Christine Riethmueller, of St. Louis, Mo., will go to the Holy Family Hospital in Rawalpindi, and Sr. M. Bernadette Egg, a graduate of the Municipal Hospital of Innsbruck, Tyrol, will go to Bengal, where the Society conducts two maternity and child-welfare centers and trains native midwives.

Sister M. Frances writes from Rawalpindi:

"Dr. Lyons and I were invited to the marriage of an Indian doctor's daughter, on last Saturday evening. The ceremony was timed to begin at 6 o'clock but as Dr. Lyons had a late call we were not able to get there until after 8.

"We found the bride and bridegroom, a handsome and intelligent looking pair, sitting cross-legged on a low divan inside a square of four green trees. Before them burned a fire, emblematic of the new home. At the side of the fire sat a Hindu priest reading from a book. All the relatives sat outside the square on opposite

(Continued on page 5)

OUR THIRD BAND OF MISSIONARIES WHO LEFT FOR INDIA ON JANUARY 23RD; SISTER M. CHRISTINE, SISTER MARGARET MARY, R.N., AND SISTER M. BERNARDETTE, R.N.

MEDICAL MISSION NOTES

RECENT FOUNDATION OF ANOTHER MEDICAL MISSION SOCIETY

Twenty years ago, Father Foucauld wrote: "How I desire that the Catholics of France would occupy themselves a little with the Algerians towards whom they have duties as parents towards their children." This wish of the holy hermit promises to be realized through the foundation of the Society of Catholic Nurses. The headquarters of the organization are in Algiers, *rue de la liberté,* 24.

The Society has been officially approved and has for its purpose the spread of the blessings of Christian civilization among the natives of Northern Africa. Its aims are to teach hygiene and sanitation, to lessen the diseases which are many and widespread in Northern Africa and especially to guide mothers in matters of health for themselves and their children.

The first center of the Society was opened in Rivet in December, 1928. In the summer of 1929, a clinic with modern equipment was founded under the auspices of His Grace Archbishop Leynaud and Pierre Bordes, Governor General of Algiers.

The Society admits professional and non-professional members.

Our best wishes go out to this new effort of Christian charity to help the suffering in Northern Africa.

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Becker, the Director of the Medical Mission Institute of Wurzburg, writes:

"This year again on the feast of the Epiphany several members of our Institute will pledge themselves for service in the missions. At the same time we will have the departure ceremony of Dr. Deutsch who with his wife, is going on work with Dr. Drexler in China, and of Dr. Buss and his wife, who also are going to China to the Kansu Mission conducted by the Fathers of the Divine Word. Dr. Drexler's sister will also be in the party as she is joining her brother, Dr. Drexler, who lost his wife in the terrible epidemic of typhus over a year ago."

INDIAN POET' SON IS HEALTH LEADER

THE workers in the Institute of Rural Reconstruction at Sriniketan, of which the son of Rabindranath Tagore, the poet-philosopher of India, is the leader, have made an effective beginning in attacking the problem of disease in the villages. By organizing and directing the work of health societies in six neighboring villages, the incidence of malaria has been reduced from 60 to 20 percent. A dispensary serving over 6,000 patients per annum is maintained. A class for giving instruction to village health workers has been started this year by Dr. Charravarty, the Indian physician in charge.

At Tagore's invitation, an American physician, Dr. Harry Timbres, has been sent by the Quakers to extend his work. His wife, a trained nurse, is helping him.

Tagore visualizes the founding of an Institute of Rural Health as the central feature of the needed medical program. It includes a modern hospital of 40 beds and a training center which will offer practical courses in village health work to young men and women who will become organizers and leaders in the health societies. The Health Section of the League of Nations is cooperating with Dr. Timbres in developing this aspect of the program: an extensive system of control of malaria and other major diseases, a program of health education, a tuberculosis sanatorium and a leper clinic.

Rabindranath Tagore, recently in this country, is eager for cooperation between East and West for, as he has said, "Mountains and seas can not obstruct the fact that deep in our beings we need you and you need us, for we are kin."—*American Journal of Nursing.*

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HOUSE PLACED AT THE DISPOSAL OF OUR SISTERS BY THE MUNICIPALITY OF DACCA BENGAL. The chapel is in the left hand wing.

Another request for Medical Missionaries to undertake maternity and child-welfare work has come from Darjeeling at the foot of Mount Everest.

CHARITY CALLETH

AT TIMES one may hear a murmur from a good Catholic at the frequency of the appeals made to his charity. This only means that for a moment he has lost the supernatural standpoint from which all should view any service they voluntarily perform for others. Heirs to the spirit and law of charity as Christ taught it, we should invest everything that is done for our weaker brethren with high spiritual dignity. Charity is the backbone of Christian civilization. Remove it and we are back again in paganism.

That this latter statement is not without foundation may be seen from the fact that quite a number of philanthropic people would solve some of the problems presented by the poor and weak by such vicious remedies as birth control and sterilization. The Christian's sense of justice and charity alike forbids such invasions of human rights. We must be prepared to meet and combat such false ideas, values and aims.

Catholics must therefore understand and be able to express the philosophy and policies of the Church towards our national life and the manifold problems which it presents. Throughout the ages the Catholic Church has been distinguished for her charities: those human expressions of a divine love that abides within her. Her charities are a witness to her understanding of the spiritual relations of men to one another interpreted in terms of human service.

Catholic charity is all-embracing. "You are all brethren," and "one is your Father who is in Heaven." It consists not merely in giving relief, but in prevention of ills. It imposes upon us the obligation of contributing our share to thinking out and giving effect to policies of social reform which will mitigate and prevent poverty. It binds us to accept the law which sends the strong to seek their holiness in service to the weak.

Catholic charity is voluntary and spontaneous, hence the manifold forms which it takes according to time and place, and its many appeals to our sympathy. Approach to the spirit of Christ broadens, it never narrows. It emancipates by relieving the strong from the tyranny of their strength and the weak from the penalties of their weakness. It helps to restore all things in Christ.

We have said that Catholic charity is all-embracing. It is necessarily so, for its expression and motive are found in Jesus Christ. The message of His preaching is to be found in His words. He says: "You have heard that it has been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies; do good to them that hate you and pray for them that persecute you, that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth on the just and the unjust."

We live in a scientific age, and science and method are being applied to charity all round us. It is for us to see that they are made to serve and not allowed to be the master of charitable work. Then they will multiply our resources and add to our capacity to serve His weak and poor. Charity has nothing to fear from science properly applied; on the contrary, it can wholeheartedly welcome its help in removing the causes of suffering and poverty.

Charity calleth us to take individually our share in helping to build up the Kingdom of God on earth, and to work for the nation. The Catholic citizen should always be the best citizen.

ANON.

THE SOCIETY OF CATHOLIC MEDICAL MISSIONARIES

The Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries is a religious community which was founded in September, 1925, with the approval of His Grace Most Rev. Michael J. Curley, Archbishop of Baltimore.

The purpose of the Society is to work for the spread of our Holy Faith and to help the sick in foreign mission countries through the establishment of hospitals and dispensaries, medical schools and training schools for native nurses, infant welfare centers, plague camps, leper asylums and traveling dispensaries, and visiting the sick in their homes. Those who are desirous of devoting their lives to God in the service of the sick in the missions find ample scope for their generosity.

Three kinds of candidates are admitted: Those who are already professionally equipped as doctors, pharmacists, nurses, etc.

Young women who desire to take up medicine, pharmacy or nursing with the intention of devoting their profession to the care of the sick in the missions.

Those who have no medical training or do not wish to take it up, but who are desirous of helping with the non-medical activities necessarily associated with the work, such as secretarial work, housekeeping, etc. There is scope for every talent.

Address all enquiries to Dr. Anna Dengel, Catholic Medical Mission House, Brookland, Washington, D. C.

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